

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

It is virtually certain that the broadcast flag, if implemented in a way that is not easily circumvented, would interfere with user's ability to record and shift media for their own personal use. Every discussion I have heard to date indicates that the broadcast flag would "bind" a copy to the hardware on which it is recorded, meaning that I could not, for example, record a program from my living room entertainment center for later viewing on my bedroom TV.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices? Apart from the ability to physically carry a videocassette or recorded DVD, the broadcast flag would limit consumer's ability to share their legally recorded data across home networks.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

Despite proponents arguments to the contrary, there can be little doubt that the broadcast flag would be necessarily be incompatible with existing technologies (DVD recorders, PCs video capture cards, etc.) The broadcast flag is a first step down a slippery slope to planned obsolescence for our current generation of machines. We can be certain that if the flag is permitted, it will be a short time before content owners, likely in cohorts with technology companies desparate to sell a new batch of flag-enabled hardware, use the "rampant piracy" they decry as justification for making their content unplayable on old or non-compliant hardware.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

Implementation of the broadcast flag will limit the development of future technologies by raising legal and financial barriers to innovation. Imagine if the inventors of the personal computer had had to consider a morass of technical and legal restrictions on the devices they were tinkering with in their garage. Mandating this flag will be a boon to the monopolies and trusts at the top of the technology and content food chains at the expense of small business and individual innovators.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

Every feature added to a consumer device raises the price, whether that feature is a value added to the consumer of the content publisher. The cost of copy protection technology will inevitably be passed on to the consumer and raise the price of commodity hardware. Do we expect, meanwhile, that the content publishers will reduce the price of their products? NO! They have demonstrated time and again that savings are not passed on to the consumer: witness the price increase that accompanied the conversion from expensive to produce vinyl to cheap CDs! The more secure the content is, the more likely mercenary copyright owners (and by this I generally refer to the previously mentioned monopolies and trusts) are to resort to usurious prices for their products.